1: Lee H-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1
Yugoslavia EF1
p. 604

XXVII

BULGARIA AND YUGOSLAVIA

DWIGHT E. LEE

Introduction

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BULGARIA and Yugoslavia emerged from the war of 1914-1918 in contrasting positions—the one a defeated power and the other a victor. This situation, a repetition of that following the Second Balkan War only six years before, helped to perpetuate a feeling of rivalry and bitterness toward each other. Both nations, however, faced serious political and economic problems at home which were far from satisfactorily settled when the war of 1939-1945 caught them up again and threw them once more on opposite sides of the struggle.

Bulgaria[1]

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The military collapse of Bulgaria in September, 1918, was followed shortly afterward on October 4 by the abdication of Tsar Ferdinand and the succession of Boris III. Although the pro-German premier, Radoslavov, had resigned some months before, his successors who signed the armistice were unable to stem the current of discontent and disillusionment caused by wartime suffering and the prospect of a severe peace. Accordingly, in the elections of August, 1919, the leftist Agrarian party won a significant victory under the leadership of Alexander Stambolisky who had gone to jail for three years because of his opposition to entry into the war and, upon his release in 1918, had sought to set up a republic. Of peasant stock, he was the embodiment of the hopes for a new era held by the Bulgarian farmers who constituted nearly 80 per cent of the population. After

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[1] The best studies on contemporary Bulgaria are the following: A. Bulatsel, *Ocherki sotsialno-politicheskoĭ zhizni Bolgarii* (Moscow, 1925); K. Dimitriev, *Bolgariya* (Moscow, [illegible]); A. Girginov, *Ot voĭnata kŭm mir* (Sofia, 1937); T. Girginov, *Istoricheski razvoĭ na savremenna Bŭlgariya* (2 v.; Sofia, 1934-1935); N. Iliev, *Boris III, tsar na Bŭlgaritĕ* (Sofia, 1936); A. P. Malinov, *Stranichki ot nashata nova politicheska istoriya* (Sofia, 1938); N. D. [illegible]kov, *Aleksandŭr Stambolĭĭski. Lichnost i idei* (Sofia, 1930); N. Stanev, *Istoriya na nova Bŭlgariya, 1878-1928* (Sofia, 1929); K. Todorov, *Politička istorija savremene Bugarske* (Belgrad, 1938). Sources in Slavic languages have been supplied by Professor C. E. Black of Princeton University.

1: Lee H-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1
Yugoslavia

becoming premier in October, 1919, Stambolisky's first task was that of signing the peace terms drawn up by the victorious Allies.

The Treaty of Neuilly, November 27, 1919, reduced Bulgaria to a smaller area than it had held before the First Balkan War of 1912 and imposed new burdens. Bulgaria lost the Aegean coast (Western Thrace) to Greece, southern Dobruja to Romania, and strips of land on the west to Yugoslavia. The army was limited to a total of 20,000. Reparations amounting to $450,000,000 were to be paid in thirty-seven years, beginning in 1921. The existence of Bulgarian minorities in all the neighboring states furnished a basis for revisionism which steadily grew, particularly after the rise of fascism throughout Europe in the thirties.[2] The provision for an exchange of populations with Greece greatly heightened the volume of refugees who streamed into Bulgaria, adding to the political ferment and economic burdens of the country. In these and other ways, the settlement exacerbated conditions under which radicalism throve.

Stambolisky won a commanding position in the parliamentary elections of March, 1920, and proceeded to ride roughshod over both the middle class and conservative parties on the right and the Communists on the left. He instituted a number of reforms, including a land law designed to break up the crown lands and larger estates, the imposition of a heavy income tax, and the establishment of a compulsory labor service which in the first four years of operation secured the equivalent of five million wage days of work for the Ministries of Public Works and Railways. In foreign policy he sought to fulfill the treaties and to effect a reconciliation with Yugoslavia among whose Communist and Agrarian parties his concepts of Slavic federation found support. His dictatorial methods, however, won him enemies on all sides, not least among them being the Macedonians who opposed his policy of rapprochement with Yugoslavia. In June, 1923, he was overthrown by a *coup d'état* organized by a group of intellectuals, led by Professor Tsankov, and the League of Army Reserve Officers, among whom Colonels Velchev and Georgiev were leaders. A few days later Stambolisky was assassinated.

Following the Stambolisky regime, the Tsankov government (1923-26) represented a swing to the right. "Communist" insurrections and violence were suppressed with great severity. The increased activity of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) caused difficulties at home and abroad, although after the assassination of its leader Alexandrov (1924) it was split into two factions under Protoguerov and Mihailov who became bitter rivals. A threat of war with Greece arose, but was averted by the action of the League of Nations. A more conciliatory government

[2] See G. P. Genov, *Bulgaria and the Treaty of Neuilly* (Sofia, 1935).

1: Lee H-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1
Yugoslavia

642 668 under Liapchev (1926-31) sought to reduce party strife and international friction. It secured a loan from the League of Nations to help in the settlement of refugees, but seemed powerless to prevent raids upon neighboring states by the IMRO which, after the assassination of Protoguerov in 1928, was dominated by Mihailov who openly defied the Sofia government and virtually reigned supreme in some frontier districts. The elections of June, 1931 brought a shift again to the left. The cabinets of Alexander Malinov and his successor, Nikola Mushanov, both of whom were Democrats representing middle class and intellectual groups, were supported by the Agrarians. This coalition found itself threatened by the rise of the Communist party which nearly captured a majority in the Sofia municipal elections of September, 1932. In the communal elections of November, however, the Agrarians and Democrats won a victory which emboldened them in an attempt to suppress both the Communists and the Macedonians in the following year.

643 669 642 Meanwhile Tsar Boris III, had steadily gained in authority and influence. The rapprochement with Italy signalized by the marriage of Boris to the daughter of King Victor Emmanuel III in 1930, and the part played by the Tsar in steps taken toward reconciliation with Yugoslavia and Romania (1933-34) helped to bring him to the fore. Then a series of domestic events enabled the Tsar to make himself a virtual dictator. Colonel Velchev, secretary of the Military League founded in 1930, and Kimon Georgiev, prominent in *Zveno* which was a fascistic civilian organization working for reform and a "strong" government, again helped to stage a *coup d'état,* May, 1934, ousting the Democratic-Agrarian Coalition and making Georgiev premier of a dictatorial government with Velchev as his principal adviser. Parliament was dismissed and political parties dissolved by decree. Vigorous action was taken against IMRO, forcing Mihailov to flee. Most of the promises of the new government, however, and especially the solution of the financial crisis, remained unfulfilled. Velchev's known hostility toward Boris III and his alleged republicanism alienated older army circles which helped to supplant Georgiev by General Zlatev who had the backing of the Tsar. Continued financial mismanagement and a reaction within the army itself to its political activities paved the way for a return to civilian government and the dissolution of the Military League after several of its members, including Velchev, had been convicted of conspiracy. This left Boris III master of the situation, although he proclaimed his intention of restoring constitutional rule.

646 666 Since the anomolous political situation within the country brought an inevitable reaction against the regime, elections for a new *sobranie* were

1: Lee H-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1
Yugoslavia

eventually held in March, 1938, under a changed electoral law which permitted married women to vote but forbade candidates to run as members of the old political parties. In May, 1938, the *sobranie* met for the first time since 1935, but found itself reduced to the position of a consulting body.

The political crises of the period after 1933 were but outward expressions of the serious economic condition in which Bulgaria, along with all other predominantly agrarian countries of eastern Europe, had found itself as a result of the world-wide economic depression. At the same time both Italy and Germany sought to bring Bulgaria into their political and economic orbits. Bulgaria for several years seemed to waver between them and their rivals in power politics. Although its refusal to join the Balkan Entente, because of its revisionist territorial claims, seemed to align Bulgaria with Italy, a tense situation was avoided by the signature of a Pact of Friendship with Yugoslavia on January 24, 1937. In 1938 when the east European atmosphere had become clouded because of Germany's annexation of Austria and the developing Munich crisis, Bulgaria gained recognition of the right to rearm by means of an agreement in July with Greece who acted on behalf of the Balkan Entente. This was followed by an Anglo-French loan amounting to ten million dollars to assist in Bulgarian rearmament, although Germany had already supplied much material toward this end. Nevertheless, Germany had two advantages over its rivals. One was its freedom to encourage Bulgarian revisionist ambitions which, after the Bulgar-Yugoslav pact, tended to create greatest tension with Romania over the Dobruja. The other was the powerful economic tie developed between the two countries by means of trade agreements. After Austria and part of Czechoslovakia had been incorporated in the Nazi Reich in 1939 about 52 per cent of Bulgaria's exports went to Germany and about 63 per cent of its imports came from there.

It is doubtful, however, if the developing ties with Germany influenced the feelings of the Bulgarian people. Tsar Boris and his governments, even though they sanctioned agreements by which the political police cooperated with the Gestapo in pursuing "Communists," sought to keep down native fascism. There was, moreover, very little antisemitism in Bulgaria. The political opposition composed of the former Agrarian, Liberal, Radical, Socialist, and Democratic party elements, was by its nature antagonistic to Nazism. And, finally, the people had always retained a deepseated feeling of sympathy and respect for Russia against whom the Nazis were ostensibly aligned. Indeed, right down to 1941 there was much ground for believing that Bulgaria might well maintain neutrality in the second World War.

1: Lee H-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria
Yugoslavia EF1

Yugoslavia[3]

728 The new Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, proclaimed at the beginning of December, 1918, was preoccupied for nearly two years with the problems of the peace settlement. Sitting at the Peace Conference of Paris as one of the victors, the Pašić government won strategically valuable strips of territory from Bulgaria; Croatia, the Bačka, part of the Baranya, and part of the Banat, which was divided along ethnic lines with Romania, from Hungary; Bosnia-Herzegovina, most of Dalmatia and Carinthia, and a part of Styria from Austria; but it was ultimately defeated in its total claims to Austrian lands. By a plebiscite, October, 1920, the district of Klagenfurt on the Drava River which was alleged to be Slovenian voted to remain with Austria. Far more serious, however, was the failure to obtain Slovenian districts on the west where Yugoslav claims ran counter to Italian aspirations.

The center of the controversy with Italy was the Istrian Peninsula and Fiume where the agrarian Slavs were intermingled with the urban Italians. Italy which had been promised Istria and much of the Dalmatian coast, though not Fiume, by the secret treaty of London in 1915, sought at the Peace Conference to make good its claims. Since these ran counter to the Wilsonian principles, an effort was made to draw the future Italo-Yugoslav frontier to accord as nearly as possible with ethnic boundaries. Although the Istrian peninsula and Slovene-populated regions north of it were eventually yielded to Italy, Wilson stood firm against the Italian acquisition of Fiume which was the only good outlet to the sea for the Yugoslavs. The Fiume question was finally left to Italy and Yugoslavia to settle between themselves after compromise proposals had been rejected by one or the other and Italian hotheads under D'Annunzio had complicated matters by seizing the city in September, 1919. The Treaty of Rapallo (November, 1920) made Fiume a free city and gave Zara and a number of Dalmatian islands to Italy. But Mussolini's government upset this arrangement and by a treaty of January 27, 1924, acquired Fiume while leaving Porto Barros, separated from the city by a small river, to Yugo-

113 [3] The best treatment of Yugoslavia can be found in: V. Čorović, *Istorija Jugoslavije* (Belgrad, 1933); M. Ivšić, *Seljačka politika* (Zagreb, 1938); Dj. Jelenić, *Nova Srbije i Jugoslavija* (Belgrad, 1923); A. Jovanović, ed., *Spomenica dvadesetpetgodišnjica oslobodjenja Južne Srbije, 1912-1937* (Skoplje, 1937); L. Marković, *Jugoslovenska država i Hrvacko pitanje (1914-1929)* (Belgrad, 1935); P. Pekić, *Propast Austro-Ugarske monarhije i postanak nasljednih država* (Subotica, 1937); *Putevi sporazuma Srba i Hrvata* (Belgrad, 1939); I. Šarinić, *Ideologija Hrvatskog Seljačkog Pokreta* (Zagreb, 1935); F. Šišić, ed., *Dokumenti o postanku kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca, 1914-1919* (Zagreb, 1920); B. M. Stepanović, *Nacionalni testament Kralja Aleksandra I.* (Belgrad, 1936); P. Vujević, *Kraljevina Jugoslavija. Geografski i etnografski pregled* (Belgrad, 1930).

1: Lee H-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria
Yugoslavia EF1

slavia. This controversy and the Fascist treatment of the several thousand Slovenes within Italy laid the foundations for deepseated ill-feeling between the two neighbors, giving rise to the bad relations between them in succeeding years and the quarrel over boundaries which was revived at the end of the second World War.

Meanwhile the government had called elections for a constituent assembly late in November, 1920. As a result of the balloting no party had a majority, but the federalist Croats, under the leadership of Radić, refused to take their seats and thus left the field to Pašić and the centralist parties. The constitution which was finally adopted on Vidovdan (June 28), 1921, set up a unitary form of government centered in Belgrad. Although it provided for a national parliament, the *skupština*, and for elected local officials, it erased historic frontiers and provincial parliaments and provided for an administration to be strictly controlled from the capital. To the Croats and many Slovenes this looked like a Serbian expansion rather than a genuine partnership of all the Slavic groups and, unfortunately, the attitude of Serb politicians seemed to bear out that conclusion. Thus, at the beginning of the newly-created state, the quarrel of centralists and federalists arose; it remained at the heart of the Yugoslav political crises which followed each other in quick succession.

In August, 1921, upon the death of King Peter, his son who had long acted as Regent succeeded him as Alexander I. Viewed with almost equal hatred and admiration by opposing factions in Yugoslavia, he was undoubtedly chiefly interested in the unification of the kingdom and the creation of a strong state that could withstand the contrary pulls of great-power interests.[4] Until January, 1929, he ruled within the constitution. Pašić, the veteran Serbian statesman, had dominated the political scene until his death in December, 1926. Radić, after upsetting the government by bringing his followers into parliament in 1924, and being imprisoned when he refused to accept proposed compromises, had finally accepted the constitution in 1925 and entered the cabinet only to withdraw less than a year later. Nevertheless, for about two years the *skupština* had embraced representation of all parts of the kingdom even though there had seemed to be no progress toward political stability or genuine unity.

Hope of achieving either of these ends by democratic political means

[4] For adverse views of King Alexander and his dictatorship, see Louis Adamic, *My Native Land* (New York, 1943), pp. 338 ff.; and Svetozar Pribičević, *La Dictature du roi Alexandre* (Paris, 1933). For favorable interpretations, see under Yugoslavia in the bibliography appended to this chapter the writings of Hamilton Fish Armstrong, especially his "After the Assassination of King Alexander," *Foreign Affairs*, XIII (January, 1935), 204-225; also Voucadine Miletić, *Le Mouvement des idées constitutionelles en Yougoslavie* (Paris, 1934).

1: Lee H-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria
Yugoslavia EF1

693 seemed to be cut off when a Montenegrin deputy shot Radić and other
642 Croat deputies during a heated debate in June, 1928. Upon the death of Radić in August, King Alexander sought to effect an agreement with the new leader of the Croat Peasant Party, Dr. Vladko Maček. The king soon became convinced, however, that Maček's minimum demands concerning the federalization of the state would ultimately disrupt it and reduce it to impotence among the powers. He accordingly took the drastic step on January 6, 1929, of abolishing the constitution and setting up a dictatorship with General Zhivković, a nonpolitical army man and friend of long standing, as premier.

642 Among the changes effected within the next few years were the abolition
656 of all political parties, the division of the country into nine *banovinas* along
182 geographical and economic lines rather than historical ones, the changing of the name of the kingdom from that of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes to Yugoslavia, and the promulgation of a new constitution which was offered as proof of the end of dictatorship. Nevertheless, censorship and police control, which of necessity accompanied the efforts to suppress opposition, not only prevented the development of healthy politics, but also created a stubborn opposition among Serbs as well as Croats and Slovenes. After 1931, moreover, the falling off of trade and the slump in industry, which was largely under foreign control, added to the discontent with the regime. This ferment weakened the means of resistance to Fascist and Nazi pressures, both political and economic, which were first applied in the mid-thirties.

648 King Alexander and his successive governments were far more success-
643 ful in foreign policy than in domestic. From the beginning, Yugoslavia naturally found a common interest with the other succession states in preventing a return of the Habsburgs to power and in opposing Hungarian revisionism. Treaties of alliance with Czechoslovakia (1920) and Romania (1921) made Yugoslavia a member of the Little Entente until it fell apart in 1938. Despite a pact of friendship signed with Italy at Nettuno in 1925, the Fiume quarrel and Mussolini's attempts to expand his influence in Danubia and the Balkans by the development of cordial relations with Albania, Austria, Hungary, and Bulgaria helped to give Yugoslavia a pro-French orientation which found expression in a treaty of friendship, November 11, 1927. Relations with Bulgaria were troubled so long as the Macedonian agitation remained unchecked, but a rapprochement was begun during the later years of King Alexander's reign. With Greece, the failure for many years to arrange satisfactorily the promised free port facilities for Yugoslavia at Salonika prevented close collaboration, but the settlement of

1: Lee H-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria
Yugoslavia EF1

this difficulty together with the conclusion of a treaty of friendship, March, 1929, brought an era of cordial relations with this neighbor. After the annual Balkan conferences of 1930-1933 had prepared the way, Yugoslavia joined with Greece, Turkey, and Romania to form the Balkan Entente in February, 1934. 648 643

At the same time King Alexander renewed his ties with France and participated in Barthou's initial preparation of plans for a Mediterranean "Locarno" designed to align Italy with France, Great Britain, and Russia against Nazi Germany. These plans, involving an agreement between Yugoslavia and Italy, were cut short by the murder of both Alexander and Barthou at Marseilles, October 9, 1934, by conspirators representing the Macedonians and, principally, the *Ustaša*, a Croat terrorist organization led by Ante Pavelić and fostered by Italy and Hungary. Thus Alexander's domestic foes worked with his enemies abroad to bring about his downfall. Despite the wave of sympathy and remorse which swept over Yugoslavia, it was clear that King Alexander and his dictatorial governments had neither unified the country nor laid solid foundations for a democratic political development. Moreover, though King Alexander had resisted the encroachments of Fascist Italy into Balkan politics, he had done little to stem the tide of the Third Reich's economic advance.

King Alexander was succeeded by his young son, Peter II, for whom a regency was set up including Prince Paul, a cousin, as the principal figure. Prince Paul began well. The threat of war with Hungary where the *Ustaša* had maintained its principal terrorist training center was averted through the mediation of the League of Nations. At home, after Prince Paul had clashed with Serbian chauvinists in the cabinet, a new government was set up under Yevtić who at first gave promise of healing the breach with the Croats. Several non-Serbs were included in the cabinet. Maček, who had been imprisoned after his public denunciation of Alexander's regime and his demand at Zagreb in November, 1932, for the establishment of a federal state, was pardoned. Free elections were promised, and political activity was permitted to revive among opposition parties. Nevertheless in the elections held in May, 1935, the government exerted the usual pressure to insure a favorable outcome and in other ways failed to fulfill expectations. Following a renewed boycott of parliament by the Croats in June, Yevtić was dropped and the formation of a new government was entrusted to Milan Stoyadinović. 643 642 665

For more than three years Stoyadinović pursued a tortuous policy both at home and abroad. Beginning with promises to liquidate the dictatorial regime and with relaxation of repressive measures, he sought by forming 642 656 665

1: Lee H-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria
Yugoslavia EF1

642 the "Radical Union" of Serbian Radicals, Slovene Clericals, and Bosnian
656 Moslems to build up a following that would assure support of the govern-
665 ment and the perpetuation of the unitary state. His aims and methods were a blow not only to the federalists but also to liberals who rallied around Maček to form the Agrarian-Democratic party from democratic and agrarian elements among the Serbs and Slovenes as well as the Croats.
648 Stoyadinović's foreign policy also fed the fires of opposition. During his regime Germany took advantage of Yugoslavia's slump in trade caused by participation in the boycott of Italy to conclude favorable trade agreements. In January, 1937, Stoyadinović concluded a treaty of Friendship and Perpetual Peace with Bulgaria and in March of the same year a pact of Nonaggression and Arbitration with Italy. This second move, which he justified as a sincere effort to maintain peace, alarmed Yugoslavia's allies in both the Little and the Balkan Ententes and found little favor among the opposition at home because it inevitably linked the country more closely with the Rome-Berlin Axis that had been nonexistent when King Alexander had considered a rapprochement with Italy three years before. A concordat with the Vatican, July, 1937, designed to win support among the Roman Catholic Croats, did little more than to stir up the anger of the Orthodox Church and had to be abandoned. Throughout 1938 the politi-
642 cal pot boiled at home while the Axis triumphed abroad. In the December
665 elections Stoyadinović was able only with difficulty to secure a majority for his party, while in Croatia the depth of antagonism to his regime was revealed by an overwhelming vote for Maček's Agrarians. In the face of this situation, Stoyadinović resigned in February, 1939.

Although the cabinet of Dragiša Cvetković embraced the same coalition as that of Stoyadinović, it nevertheless sought to solve the Croat problem and to reëstablish a more democratic regime. In August, just on the eve of the outbreak of war between Germany and Poland, an agreement known as the *Sporazum* was reached with Maček. This provided for Croatian autonomy in all matters except foreign affairs, foreign trade, defense, public security, and communications. At the same time the cabinet was reorganized to include Maček, as a vice premier, along with other Croat Agrarians. This was, however, but the first step in the creation of a truly democratic and federal state, and little more was accomplished during the following months. Furthermore, the manner of the special agreement with the Croats angered Serbian and Slovenian liberals and federalists, while the ever closer bonds between the government and the Axis continued to alienate all patriots of every political opinion. In this way the country was far from united when the war came.

The War of 1939-1945

Jockeying for Position

When the European war broke out in September, 1939, the conditions in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia were not dissimilar. In each country a semi-dictatorial government, primarily responsible to the monarch, ruled with the assent of a subservient parliament. The predominantly agrarian masses were discontented with both political and economic conditions but were inarticulate and ineffectively organized. While all former political parties had been officially dissolved, their members continued to carry on a half-concealed activity beneath the eyes of the censor and the political police. The economy of each country was tied, in the main, to Germany's; although in Bulgaria, Great Britain and France made a pretense at counteracting German influences, they had apparently abandoned Yugoslavia to the Axis. In foreign relations both governments officially pursued a policy of neutrality, while their ministers and rulers made open or surreptitious visits to Hitler or his henchmen. German "tourists" ceaselessly worked in each country for the benefit of the German Reich.

Beneath the surface, however, there were forces which caused Bulgaria and Yugoslavia to take different courses when the crucial test came. In Yugoslavia resistance to collaboration with the Axis sprang up the minute the government capitulated. In Bulgaria, on the other hand, the government was able to swing the country into the Axis camp and keep it there until the triumph of the United Nations and particularly Russia made it clear that the Axis was losing the war.

As late as February, 1940, the Bulgarian government[5] assured the members of the Balkan Entente that it would not press its revisionist claims while the war lasted. With the dismemberment of Romania, however, in the summer of 1940, Bulgaria considered itself absolved of this pledge and in September obtained Southern Dobruja, thus regaining the boundary of 1912. Although Romania and Hungary were persuaded in November to adhere to the Tripartite Pact of Germany, Italy, and Japan, and despite the fact that over 80 per cent of Bulgaria's trade was now being carried on with Germany, the tsar and his government refused to join the Axis. Russia, whose agreement with the Reich in August, 1939, had undoubtedly helped to confuse the Bulgarian people, may have had something to do

[5] In well-managed elections, January, 1940, the government obtained a *sobranje* composed of 140 supporters and 20 opponents of whom 9 were Communists. A new government, organized on February 16, was headed by Bogdan Filov who remained premier until he entered the Regency Council in September, 1943.

1: Lee H-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1
Yugoslavia EF1

B
648

with the refusal, for the Soviet plainly indicated its disapproval of a Bulgarian alliance with Germany. In January and February, 1941, however, German pressure upon Bulgaria was greatly increased as the Nazi regime prepared for the conquest of Greece, with whom Italy had been at war since the previous October. The United States and Great Britain sought to warn Bulgaria against repeating the mistake of the first World War, while the opposition within the country likewise voiced its disapproval of a pro-German policy. But German "tourists" and German propaganda gradually won the upper hand, until finally, on March 1, Premier Filov signed the Axis pact at Vienna. He had undoubtedly been offered the fulfillment of Bulgarian revisionist claims against Yugoslavia and Greece. German troops immediately poured into the country from across the Danube and German economic experts, who had already gained experience while turning Romania into a "purely primary producer," began to prepare Bulgaria for its role as a "first-class exporting country."[6]

Yugoslavia

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The adherence of Bulgaria to the Axis meant that Yugoslavia was all but surrounded by German satellites, for only on the south, where the Greeks were more than holding their own, was there a gap in the Axis system. Obviously Germany's plans for a quick conquest of Greece in preparation for an attack upon Soviet Russia required the coöperation of the Yugoslavs. Accordingly the familiar pressures were now exerted upon the Belgrad government. Although Yugoslavia's economy was not quite as dependent as Bulgaria's on the Reich, the country was in a more vulnerable geographical position. Moreover, the dissident nationalities offered a fine opportunity for Nazi propaganda, while Prince Paul and other men of the government and of leading business circles had established close con-
[625] tacts with the Fascist and Nazi regimes. If wartime revelations are to be trusted, it would appear, for example, that beginning in 1937 Yugoslav political police entered into a working agreement with the Gestapo to help
648 eliminate political undesirables. It is not surprising, therefore, that Premier
669 Cvetković and Foreign Minister Cincar-Marković were persuaded to sign the Tripartite Pact at Vienna on March 25, 1941, and at the same time agreed, apparently, to permit the passage of German troops to Greece. But here the parallel with Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria ends, for the Yugoslav people made such a prompt and unmistakable protest against

[6] For convenient summaries of events and of Bulgarian and German aims, see "The German Threat to Bulgaria," *Bulletin of International News*, XVIII (February 22, 1941), 191-197; "German New Order Reappears," *ibid.*, XVIII (November 29, 1941), 1912-14; and "Bulgaria and the War," *ibid.*, XX (November 13 and 27, 1943), 989-94 and 1031-39.

1: Lee H-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria
Yugoslavia EF1

the action of the government that a coalition of opposition forces under the nominal leadership of General Simović was able within two days to oust both the cabinet and the regency by a bloodless *coup d'état*. [669] 648 721

While the country seethed with exultant excitement, the new government realized how hopeless a stand against the German army would be, and accordingly sought to pursue a policy of appeasement short of actual collaboration. But Berlin cut short such plans and opened a blitz attack by an aerial bombardment of Belgrad on Easter Sunday, April 6. Days of confusion and anxiety followed in which the *Wehrmacht* rapidly overran the country, splitting up and surrounding the partially mobilized and ill-supplied Yugoslav army. Bulgaria joined in the invasion by striking into the long-coveted region of Macedonia. Young King Peter II and his principal ministers fled the country, eventually to find refuge in London. In approximately eleven days Germany and her allies had conquered Yugoslavia. They failed, however, to reckon with the spirit of resistance which was still being nurtured in the mountains and which was ultimately to defeat them.

Immediately after the invasion the Axis began to divide the country in order the better to insure control of its political and economic life. Germany annexed northern Slovenia and occupied the Banat; Hungary regained Bačka, Baranya, and small districts on the Mur River; Bulgaria acquired most of Macedonia where the notorious IMRO leader, Mihailov, was reported to be in charge of the occupation; Italy took part of Slovenia which became the Province of Lubliana, most of the Dalmatian coast, and some districts in Macedonia on behalf of puppet Albania. Italy also assumed the position of protector over puppet governments in the "Kingdom of Croatia" and the resurrected Kingdom of Montenegro. These last two creations illustrated the policy of "divide and rule" pursued by both Germany and Italy. By playing upon latent hatreds, particularly of the Croats and Serbs, and even fomenting attacks upon one another, they not only exterminated many potential enemies but also retarded the development of a strong and united resistance movement. Germany, for example, as early as April 15, 1941, had recognized the independence of Croatia under the puppet government of the notorious Ante Pavelić. A month later the Kingdom of Croatia was proclaimed with the Duke of Aosta, a cousin of Victor Emmanuel III, as king. During the following months stories of Croat atrocities committed against the Serbs and of Serb reprisals embittered both peoples. The same technique was used with respect to the organized resistance of General Mihailović, an army officer who remained inside the country and harassed the Axis forces, and later Tito (Josip Broz), the left-wing Partisan commander who finally emerged as the

727 648 642 727 668

1: Lee H-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria
Yugoslavia EF1

642 727 668 725 dominant leader of a revolutionary movement. In the rump of Yugoslavia that was left intact, a puppet government under General Nedić was set up at Belgrad in defiance of King Peter's government-in-exile.

Since 1941, the story of Yugoslavia has been that of slow resurrection from the bomb craters to which the Axis had consigned it and of the establishment of a revolutionary regime. At first the outside world heard only of the resistance of General Mihailović who was made a minister of war in the government-in-exile though contact with him was maintained only through British liaison officers sent to help him. By the end of 1942 news began to appear of the Partisans who attracted a wide following but were inspired by Communist leadership and were encouraged and supported by Soviet Russia. Many joined the "Army of Liberation" led by Tito not only because it carried on active guerrilla warfare when Mihailović followed more cautious tactics, but also, and above all, because its slogan was a revolutionary one: "Death to Fascism—Liberty to the People." A civil war, paralleling the fight against the Axis, soon emerged, and all efforts to stop it were unavailing. Outside Yugoslavia the Partisans soon gained the upper hand in an astute propaganda campaign that magnified their deeds and glorified their aims while the activities of Mihailovich were belittled or omitted from mention, even though he continued until the defeat of the Germans to maintain a considerable force and to give material assistance 648 to the Allies, particularly to airmen shot down in his territory. The ultimate victory of the Partisans in the civil war was foreshadowed, however, when at Teheran in the military declaration of December 1, 1943, Roosevelt and Churchill agreed with Stalin that "the Partisans should be supported by supplies and equipment to the greatest possible extent, and also by Commando operations." Their victory both against the Germans and the Chetniks was assured when the course of the war brought Soviet Russia's troops into Yugoslavia in the autumn of 1944. Mihailović paid for his failure, and that of the more conservative political forces which he represented, with his life on July 17, 1946, after being convicted of treason by a Belgrad People's Court of the new regime.[7]

642 727 Meanwhile the Partisans had set up a provisional government which drew its authority from an "Anti-Fascist Council for National Liberation

113 [7] The available literature on the war period and the Yugoslav resistance movements is highly controversial in character. For pro-Partisan writings, see, under Yugoslavia in the bibliography for this chapter, Adamic, Stoyan Pribichevich, United Committee of South-Slavic Americans, and *Yugoslavia;* on Mihailović see the articles by F. A. Voigt listed in the bibliography, and the very fully documented and impressive defense by David Martin, *Ally Betrayed: The Uncensored Story of Tito and Mihailovich* (New York, 1946). Winifred N. Hadsel, "The Struggle for Yugoslavia," *Foreign Policy Reports,* XIX (March 1, 1944), 314-327, is the most objective brief treatment.

1: Lee H-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1
Yugoslavia EF1

of Yugoslavia" (AVNOJ), established at Jayce, November, 1943. Following the Teheran decision, pressure was put upon King Peter in London to make an agreement with Tito. This was accomplished in the summer of 1944 by Ivan Subašić who had been appointed premier of the government-in-exile for that purpose. As the Germans were gradually cleared out of the country after the surrender of Italy and Bulgaria, the further step of setting up a provisional government on Yugoslav soil was taken in March, 1945, when a new regency council was appointed, Tito was made premier, and Subašić became foreign minister. Though the story of the next few months was to be scarcely less exciting than that of the war period, it belongs to the era of peacemaking and reconstruction where it will be discussed.

Bulgaria

Even though Bulgaria shared in the early triumphs of the Axis, occupying Thrace as well as most of Macedonia, its position was little better than Yugoslavia's. The Bulgarian government had to adopt a policy of severe repression, especially after 1941, in order to keep in line the mass of the population whose traditional sympathies for Russia and the United States were aroused after their entry into the war against Germany. Moreover, the Third Reich made ever increasing demands upon the country as the initial Nazi victories were turned into defeat in both Russia and the Mediterranean. Reports from Bulgaria of insurrections, sabotage, student demonstrations, Communist terrorism, and disaffected public servants including army officers were common throughout 1942 and 1943. The Nazis found it necessary not only to direct all police work but also to interfere frequently in the administration of important government departments until the German Minister, Beckerle, became virtually a *Gauleiter* in a hostile land. Apparently Boris III and his governments did their best to resist the most distasteful demands, and it may well be that the tsar met his death in August, 1943, because of his refusal to yield to Hitler's requests. Some indication of the temper of the people may be gleaned from the fact that Premier Filov arranged a pro-German Council of Regency for young Tsar Simeon II without taking the risk of seeking authorization from a specially elected *sobranje* as required by the constitution.[8]

By late spring, 1944, reports began to appear concerning "Partisan" activity in Bulgaria and the formation of a "Fatherland Front" composed of

[8] Very little reliable information concerning Bulgaria since 1941 has been published. For the handiest summaries of news reports, see the references cited in footnote 6 above and also the *Bulletin of International News*, XXI XXII (1944-45). Foreign newspaper correspondents were admitted to Bulgaria only in the middle of 1945.

1: Lee H-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1
Yugoslavia EF1

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668 Communists, Agrarians, Democrats, and republicans. In the summer the
Soviet Union, against whom Bulgaria had not declared war, began to press
642 for the ousting of the Germans and a reversal of the policy pursued since
648 1941. On September 2, a new Bulgarian government, headed by a former secretary of Stambolisky, Konstantin Muraviev, and including former Premier Mušanov, announced the full restoration of democratic freedom and rights, a return to neutrality, and the nullification of the Tripartite Pact. It also dispatched representatives to Cairo to negotiate an armistice with Great Britain and the United States and, on September 8, declared
721 war on Germany. In the meantime, however, Russia, not fully satisfied
642 with the course being pursued, declared war on Bulgaria on September 5. This confusing situation was clarified four days later when Muraviev was succeeded by a new government which had the full support of the "Fatherland Front." It was led by Kimon Georgiev, who was alleged to have experienced a change of heart since his participation in the *coup d'état* of 1934, and included his former colleague, Colonel Velchev.

Before the end of September Russian military forces had moved into the country and were rapidly turning the Bulgarian army, now placed under the command of a Russian General, Tolbukhin, against the fleeing
728 Germans. By the formal armistice terms, signed in Moscow on October 28, 1944, Bulgaria promised to withdraw from all territories occupied in Greece and Yugoslavia, to restore all properties of the United Nations and make reparation for damages, to rid Bulgaria of all pro-Axis organizations, to coöperate in the arrest and trial of war criminals, and to accept an Allied Control Commission which would regulate and supervise the execution of the armistice. Since Russia held a dominant position in the Commission and since Bulgaria was prepared to follow Communist leadership, her lot as an ex-Axis satellite differed little from that of Yugoslavia.

Reconstruction and Peacemaking

Y-B
669 Reconstruction in both Yugoslavia and Bulgaria took the form of a revolution led by Communists and was patterned after the policies and practices of the Soviet Union.

The National Front in Yugoslavia

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642 The Tito government, established in Yugoslavia in 1945, promised that
[631] it would "comply with the fundamental and general principles of constitutional government" and that it intended to found a democratic, federative state. This was to consist of Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Macedonia. Provisional governments were formed in each of these units in April and May, 1945. While Tito's ter-

1: Lee H-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria
Yugoslavia EF1

ritorial claims against Italy were bringing about his first conflicts with the Western powers, his policy at home began to open rifts within AVNOJ and to widen the gaps between his regime and those who had opposed him from the beginning. In August King Peter accused him of setting up a dictatorship and at the same time disowned the regents agreed upon earlier in the year. In September and October leaders of non-Communist parties who had collaborated with Tito during the war began to leave the National Front and Subašić, who had been put under house arrest in September, resigned from the government in October. Nevertheless, plans for the election of a constituent assembly were pressed forward and the elections were held in November under conditions which the opposition charged were grossly unfair. After the announcement that the National Front had won the elections by 90.4 per cent of the votes cast, the newly elected assembly, composed mainly of Communists with a scattering representation from other parties among its 489 members, abolished the monarchy and proclaimed the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia on November 29, 1945. A few days later the Assembly set up a Presidium as the supreme executive of the new republic and elected Ivan Ribar chairman.

Although the United States and Great Britain questioned whether or not the guarantees of personal freedom, freedom from fear, liberty of conscience, freedom of speech, liberty of the press, and freedom of assembly—all of which were contained in the Tito-Subašić agreement and approved by the three great powers at Yalta in February—had been effectively implemented, they recognized the new regime on December 22, 1945.

In the following eighteen months Tito's government established a new constitution which was modeled very closely upon that of a republic in the Soviet Union. The six federal units were retained and in addition the Voivodina (Baranya-Bačka-Banat) was made an autonomous province and the Kosovo-Metohiya district an autonomous territory. A vigorous campaign continued against "war criminals," while some former prominent political leaders, such as Maček and Gavrilović, fled into exile. Much attention, however, was devoted to problems of reconstruction and on April 25, 1947 the assembly unanimously approved a five-year plan involving the expenditure of $5,500,000,000 in order to achieve both contentment at home and freedom from dependence upon capitalist countries abroad.[9] In re-

[9] For critical treatments of the elections, the constitution, and the federal set-up, see "Political parties of Yugoslavia," *Free Europe*, XIII (Oct., 1946), 320-24; Alex N. Dragnich, "Yugoslavia's new constitution," *Current History*, X (May, 1946), 420-23; and Dinko Tomašić, "Nationality Problems and Partisan Yugoslavia," *J. Central European Affairs*, VI (July, 1946), 111-25. A more recent and sympathetic comment is that of A. J. P. Taylor, "Impressions of Yugoslavia," *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, May 22, 1947, 13.

1: Lee H-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1
Yugoslavia EF1

fusing to attend the conference called at Paris to consider the Marshall Plan for European reconstruction, Yugoslavia manifested her determination to stand by Soviet Russia economically as well as politically.

The Fatherland Front in Bulgaria

In attempting to fulfill the terms of the armistice and to prepare for parliamentary elections, the Georgiev government in Bulgaria, like that of Tito in Yugoslavia, was accused of pursuing totalitarian tactics. The United States and Great Britain entered protests against the conduct of the elections of November, 1945, in which 88 per cent of the vote was reported to be in favor of the Fatherland Front. The effort of the two powers to bring about the admission to the government of two representatives of "other democratic groups" proved unavailing, despite the agreement of Soviet Russia to the proposal at the Moscow Conference in December. The National Assembly which chose Vassil Kolarov, a Communist, to be its president, arranged for a plebiscite, September 9, 1946, on the form of government. When the results went overwhelmingly in favor of a republic, the Assembly on September 15, declared Bulgaria to be a People's Republic. Elections in October, following the drafting of a constitution, returned an Assembly less predominantly Communist than Yugoslavia's, though whether this outcome was designed or came about because of a failure to crush the opposition effectively is not clear. The Fatherland Front majority of 366 deputies was made up of 279 Communists (Workers' Party), sixty-nine dissident Agrarians, nine *Zveno* members, eight dissident Social Democrats, and one Radical; while the opposition of 99 was composed of ninety Agrarians under the leadership of Petkov, and nine Social Democrats led by Lelchev.[10] In November Georgiev resigned as premier and was succeeded by Georgi Dimitrov, an eminent Communist who had been made famous by the Reichstag Fire Trial in 1934 and had been living in Russia until the end of the war. Like Yugoslavia, Bulgaria had entered upon the path of a Soviet-orientated state.

Peacemaking and Foreign Relations

Beginning with the United Nations Conference on International Organization at San Francisco in 1945, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, whenever represented or discussed at international conferences, have been led or supported by Soviet Russia. Thus they are both aligned with the "Eastern"

[10] For a brief description of the elections and the policies of the Dimitrov regime by a sympathetic observer, see Commander Edgar P. Young, "'People's Republic Bulgaria'," *Contemporary Review*, CLXXI (March, 1947), 162-66.

1: Lee H-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1
Yugoslavia EF1

side of the East-West division that seems to have split Europe and the world.

With respect to boundary settlements, Yugoslavia failed to get Trieste and an additional slice of Carinthia, although she won most of the Istrian Peninsula and much of Venezia Giulia which she had demanded. At the same time Bulgaria retained the part of southern Dobruja awarded her in 1941, but failed to get an outlet to the sea through "Aegean Macedonia" as she desired. Although both governments, along with Albania's, were guilty of permitting, if not fostering, attacks upon Greece by armed bands in support of Greek Communists and refused to coöperate fully with the United Nations investigating committee, it is not yet clear whether they hoped to wrest part of Macedonia from Greece by force or looked forward to a secession by a Communist group which would join the Yugoslav federation.

It is certain, however, that Bulgaria's relations with Yugoslavia were conducted in the spirit of the declaration of January 10, 1945 in favor of "the closest possible collaboration with the peoples of the new Yugoslavia." Tito more than once reciprocated this sentiment, raising the conjecture that perhaps the federal structure of Yugoslavia might be extended to embrace Bulgaria. Until August, 1947, however, collaboration took the form of an agreement, completed on August 2, upon a mutual assistance pact and full cultural and economic coöperation, described in the announcement as virtually wiping out the frontier between them. At the same time Yugoslavia made a series of agreements with Albania that integrated its economy closely with Yugoslavia's. Thus the century-old dream of Balkan Slavic leaders came close to realization by means of the binding force of Communism. In this and in many other respects Bulgaria and Yugoslavia are experiencing a revolution still at full tide. What the ultimate ebb and flow may bring still remains obscured by the uncertainties and imponderables not only within their boundaries, but perhaps even more by those in the world around them.

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* The author wishes to acknowledge the valuable assistance of Miss Ruth Savord, Librarian of the Council on Foreign Relations, in compiling this bibliography.

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175

[For historical data during the years 1918 to 1947, see category 116, entire article (pp. 604-621)].